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1963/06/04

REVIEWED BY 1/1/CS/Kowit DATE 2/16/88
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(V) DOWNGRADE TO () SECRET, OADR

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June 4, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR, DEPT. OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Contingency Plan -- Low Altitude Surveillance Flights over Cuba.

With reference to my memorandum of June 1 on the foregoing subject, there is attached a memorandum of comments by Terry Foxworth which I have discussed with Paul Hiten.

After reconsidering the matter, Paul and I concur with Ambassador Thompson's suggestion that the essence of warning is the event of an unsuccessful first attack (paragraphs 5.3.3. and 5.3.3.4.) should be directed to Castro rather than to Aristobol. Depending on the time of day in Havana, a message from us to Castro through the radio could be expected to take a minimum of 10 hours and up to possibly 20 hours. Thus, if, in the event of an unsuccessful attack, we were to adopt the course of conducting additional low-level reconnaissance flights primarily for the purpose of establishing U.S./Cuba intent, it would be necessary to have sufficient time to ensure that the message had been delivered to Castro prior to conducting such additional flights.

In page 7, the heading "Unsuccessful First Attack" should be preceded by the letter "b." rather than the letter "a."

With respect to Ambassador Thompson's comment on page 5.6. on page 7 -- conducting a reprisal attack early the next morning -- I imagine that the problem of obtaining accurate information and reaching decisions will, probably take care of this.

As the only contingency in this scenario that would have to require a public statement is that of reprisal by us against a successful first attack, there is attached a first draft of a possible statement to be issued by the President in that eventuality. I am also preparing drafts of messages to Aristobol and our allies that would be required under this contingency.

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PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT IN CASE OF SUCCESSFUL CUBAN
ATTACK ON A RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT

Today a US low-level reconnaissance aircraft was attacked and shot down by [MIG interceptors] [anti-aircraft artillery] over Cuba. The pilot is believed dead [alive]. The nature of the attack clearly demonstrates the deliberateness of this intolerable action.

It will be recalled that after the removal of offensive missiles and bombing planes from Cuba, the Cuban Government refused to agree to measures of international inspection to insure that such offensive weapons were not reintroduced and the peace of this hemisphere again threatened. In these circumstances, the US, consistent with the terms of the OAS Resolution of October 23, has made it clear that surveillance of Cuba will be maintained until such time as Cuba ceases to be a threat to the peace and security of the hemisphere.

The situation in Cuba has not been satisfactory to the United States nor to the other states of this hemisphere but we have been able to live with this situation because we were able to assure ourselves that preparations for actions threatening our security were not being carried out in Cuba. We have kept our surveillance measures to the minimum and have only made low-level flights when reports of the reintroduction of offensive missiles or other evidence required checking.

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Now the Cuban Government has resorted to force to change even this uneasy modus-vivendi although our position has been made clear.

In compliance with my instructions, our forces today have taken action, employing conventional armaments, to insure the destruction of the [air bases] [anti-aircraft artillery complexes] directly involved in the attack [a] in a manner designed insofar as possible to avoid harm to the Cuban people, who are not responsible for this outrage. We intend to maintain our reconnaissance flights. Should they continue to meet resistance, we shall take all necessary appropriate measures. Meanwhile, I have also directed the Secretary of Defense to take the necessary precautionary measures.

We have kept our NATO and OAS Allies fully informed. Ambassador Stevenson is requesting the convening of a Special Session of the UN Security Council and will report on the actions we have taken pursuant to the October 23 Resolution of the OAS.

I call upon Dr. Castro and the Cuban authorities to desist immediately from further attacks on our peaceful reconnaissance aircraft, and thus to make a contribution toward establishing peace in the Caribbean.

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DRAFT PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE TO CHAIRMAN KHRUSHCHEV

Today a US low-level reconnaissance aircraft was attacked and shot down by [MIG interceptors] [anti-aircraft artillery] over Cuba. The pilot is believed dead [alive]. The nature of the attack clearly demonstrates the deliberateness of this intolerable action.

It will be recalled that after the removal of offensive missiles and bombing planes from Cuba, the Cuban Government refused to agree to measures of international inspection which you had indicated were appropriate to insure that such offensive weapons were not reintroduced and the peace of this hemisphere again threatened. In these circumstances, the US, consistent with the terms of the OAS Resolution of October 23, has made it clear that surveillance of Cuba will be maintained until such time as Cuba ceases to be a threat to the peace and security of the hemisphere.

The situation in Cuba has not been satisfactory to the United States nor to the other states of this hemisphere, but we have been able to live with this situation because we were able to assure ourselves that preparations for actions threatening our security were not being carried out in Cuba. We have kept our surveillance measures to the minimum and have only made low-level flights when reports of the reintroduction of offensive missiles or other evidence required checking.

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We have been concerned about the possibility of an incident arising from our aerial surveillance, and have attempted to avoid provoking such an incident. Nonetheless, the need for maintaining such surveillance is unchanged, and we shall continue such flights.

I have instructed the Secretary of Defense to undertake actions, employing conventional armaments, to insure the destruction of the air bases anti-aircraft artillery complexes directly involved in the attacks, in a manner designed insofar as possible to avoid harm to the Cuban people. I have also instructed the Secretary of Defense to undertake certain precautionary and alerting actions.

We will meet continuing interference with our overflights by appropriate reprisal until they desist. It is, of course, our hope that the Cubans will not continue their hostilities.

I believe that you can assist the situation by using your influence with Dr. Castro to urge a cessation of actions interfering with the established peaceful US reconnaissance of Cuba. I am also sending a message to him expressing our desire to prevent continuation and expansion of the incident, and I will make an appropriate public statement setting forth the situation and our position.

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SECRET MESSAGE TO NATO AND OAS ALLIES

Today a US low-level reconnaissance aircraft was attacked and shot down by [MIG interceptors] [anti-aircraft artillery] over Cuba. The pilot is believed dead [alive]. The nature of the attack clearly demonstrates the deliberateness of this intolerable action.

It will be recalled that after the removal of offensive missiles and bombing planes from Cuba, the Cuban Government refused to agree to measures of international inspection to insure that such offensive weapons were not reintroduced and the peace of this hemisphere again threatened. In these circumstances, the US, consistent with the terms of the OAS Resolution of October 23, has made it clear that surveillance of Cuba will be maintained until such time as Cuba ceases to be a threat to the peace and security of the hemisphere.

The situation in Cuba has not been satisfactory to the United States nor to the other states of this hemisphere, but we have been able to live with this situation because we were able to assure ourselves that preparations for actions threatening our security were not being carried out in Cuba. We have kept our surveillance measures to the minimum and have only made low-level flights when reports of the reintroduction of offensive missiles or other evidence required checking. Today's low-level flight is the first since February.

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To NATO Governments and NAC: As Secretary Rusk mentioned at the North Atlantic Council Meeting on April 10, we have been concerned about the possibility of an incident arising from our aerial surveillance, and have attempted to avoid looking such an incident. Nonetheless, the need for maintaining such surveillance is unchanged, and we shall continue such flights.

I am instructing the Secretary of Defense to undertake actions, employing conventional armaments, to insure the destruction of the [air bases] [anti-aircraft artillery complexes] directly involved in the attack[s] in a manner designed insofar as possible to avoid harm to the Cuban people.

I have also instructed the Secretary of Defense to undertake certain precautionary and alerting actions, including evacuation of dependents from Guantanamo and reinforcement of that base, and appropriate alert status for US forces. We do not anticipate any Soviet Bloc military action. Cuban reactions are less certain, but we will meet continuing interference in our overflight with appropriate retaliatory action, including offending anti-air systems until they desist. It is, of course, our hope that the Cubans will not continue their hostilities. I am informing Dr. Castro, and Chairman Khrushchev, of our desire to

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prevent the escalation of the incident. We will request a Special Session of the UN Security Council, and will report on the actions we have taken pursuant to the October 23 Resolution of the UN. Finally, I plan to issue a statement setting forth our position.

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